

I offer these tips in the spirit of creating a home and family environment that supports, encourages, and nourishes the pursuit of learning and the value of education. My experience has shown me that the philosophy and attitude that your child experiences at home is often the most powerful determinant of educational success. Kids can learn to love learning at home.

Tips to teach kids to keep track of their time:

Kids who manage their own time do better in school.

Managing time is an important skill kids need to be successful in school—and at home. (After all, they need to get their homework done on time!) Experts have found that kids who know how to manage their own time—who have what’s known as “self-discipline” — are more successful in life, whether it’s in college or a career. In fact, kids who have self-discipline have an even better chance at school success than kids with a high IQ!

But most kids need help learning how to manage their time. The good news is that time management is a skill that can be taught and learned. Here are some ways to help your child learn time-management skills:

- ❖ **Make an "On time" Sheet:** On a sheet of paper, write down a basic timeline of your child's school day: 6.00 a.m. – Wake up 6:30 a.m. – Be dressed and downstairs for breakfast 6:45 a.m. – Leave for school 7:00 a.m. – School's out! 2:45 p.m. 4-5 pm leisure– Homework is finished 6:00 p.m. – Dinner 7:00 p.m. – Bedtime 8:00 Post the sheet on the refrigerator or your child's bedroom wall – anywhere your child will easily see it. This will give kids a sense of their day, and also helps them be more aware of time. (And since their schedule is all written down, you might have fewer arguments about when it's time to get to school, do their homework, sit down to dinner, and go to bed!)
- ❖ **Cut down on screen time :** Television is one of the biggest time-

waste for kids (and, admit it, for adults too). Decide with your child how many hours of television she'll watch per week. If he/she's watching too much TV, have her cut back the first week, then more the following week. This makes her more aware of how much time is spent in front of the tube, teaches her to take responsibility for screen time, and might even open up her schedule for other fun activities.

- ❖ **Use a homework chart:** Have your child make a homework chart and list assignments for Monday through Friday. After she's finished each assignment, she can put a check mark next to it. This teaches children how to keep track of deadlines and duties.

- ❖ **Praise your child's efforts to learn, and give lots of reassurance.** Remember, learning is hard. You should shower the learner with praise and reassurance. This is not "empty praise." Some parents feel that they should praise a child only when he has done something marvelous to "deserve" it. While understandable, this point of view is counterproductive. It is like adding oil to your car's engine only when it "deserves" it. A child needs praise all the time, just as an engine needs oil all the time. Learning generates heat and friction in the brain; praise and reassurance lubricate and smooth the process. Never withhold praise and reassurance. Your child will know when he or she has done something marvelous; you do not need to hold back your praise for only those special moments. In fact, frequent praise and reassurance will make those special moments come more often.
- ❖ **Value learning.** Talk about the importance of learning. Tell your child why learning matters. Ask your child over dinner, "What did you learn today?"
- ❖ **Read aloud to your child.** Reading aloud helps develop the imagination, because it allows the listener to form his own picture in his mind. It also helps develop a sense of the music and timing of language.
- ❖ **Make sure your child knows that it is safe to fail.** No one learns without failing first. The only way you can develop a new skill is by passing through a period of doing poorly, then gradually improving. If your child is afraid to fail because she fears ridicule or disapproval, she will learn much less than the child who is bold and brave enough to learn new skills.
- ❖ **If your child is "fighting with his brain," pounding his head, and saying, "I'm dumb!" as he does his homework, give him**

reassurance and then stay with him for awhile. Help him bear the tension of learning. Tell him that the pain and frustration he feels are okay, a normal part of the learning process. Ask him whether he needs some help, or whether there is another approach to the problem that he might try.

- ❖ **Encourage taking notes in class:** Make sure to tell your child that taking notes in class is fine and copying what is being written on the board is crucial and highly recommended.
- ❖ Taking notes and organizing thoughts are critical first steps in the creation of a good assignment. Without a detailed account of the assignment and the information that was provided in class, it can be difficult to produce quality work that meets the teacher's expectations.
- ❖ **Focus on Homework.** For each subject, whether your children have been given homework or not, make sure they review their notes. This will mean that when a big test or an end of unit test comes up, they will be prepared to study for it. Focusing on homework will also help your children be ready for the next lesson, and ready to ask any questions that might have come up.
- ❖ **Keep your notes neat and clear.** While your children are applying the previous tip, they can "kill two birds with one stone" by improving the quality of their notes. Make sure your child's notes contain all the information they need to know. Have them highlight or underline the most important points. Notes full of crossed out words and messy ink patches need to be rewritten altogether.
- ❖ **Keep your schoolbag neat.** Every evening have your child/ren empty their schoolbags to make them neater. You will be amazed by what they might find! Often, some "lost" notes or homework will show up just in time. After a little while, your children will become naturally neater.
- ❖ **Use your time efficiently.** If your children get stuck on a particular piece of homework, have them leave it and move on to the next piece. Otherwise, their frustration will rise and make matters worse. Have your children go back to the piece they left after a while. Things might be clearer then.
- ❖ **Always look ahead.** Your children should use their school planners or their own schedules to anticipate what they will need to be doing soon. Encourage them to do a little bit extra, even when they seem to be finished with the homework for that day. If a test is coming up, make sure your children don't leave studying to the last minute.
- ❖ **Do research wisely.** If research is involved in a project, be careful about how your children use the Internet. The Internet is a valuable

resource, but it can be very distracting. Your children might get sidetracked and waste time going from topic to topic. Every now and then, take your children to the library to do their research. They will find valuable information and learn many useful research skills.

- ❖ **Find your way.** This is going to be trial and error at the beginning, but for any subject and homework assignment, your children will have to find what works best for them. If positive results are not occurring, there is something they are not doing right. Some children may have to rewrite their notes to remember facts, others might have to read them aloud, while still others might need to act them out or build something. Once the right way is found, learning will improve.
- ❖ **Prioritize what must be done.** Your children must learn to prioritize the things they need to do. Schoolwork and extracurricular activities must come first. Make this very clear to your children and help them stick to this priority.
- ❖ **Communicate with teachers.** This applies to you as parents as well as to your children. If there is any doubt about an assignment, contact the teacher. Encourage your children to ask the teacher if they find something to be unclear. Your children can do this after class or the next day. Doing this will also help your children develop important communication skills and build their self-confidence.

Last but not least

A simple note of appreciation can be enough to motivate a teacher to keep on doing a good job. If you are a parent, consider writing your child's teacher a short note thanking her for helping your child become better in math, science or another subject.

Communication with your child's teacher is very important. We're on the same team and we need to work together to ensure a positive successful school experience for your child. If at any time you have a question about your child, please don't hesitate to ask the teacher. You may request that the teacher phone you or you may wish to schedule a conference.